

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

19 October 2000

Projects Reviewed

Westlake Plaza Visitor Center
Seattle Design Commission
 Handbook Revisions
Olympic Sculpture Park
North Waterfront Access Project
Fifth and Yesler
Schnitzer Northwest Development

Convened: 8:30am

Adjourned: 4:00pm

Commissioners Present

Rick Sundberg
Ralph Cipriani
Jack Mackie
Cary Moon
Donald Royse
Sharon Sutton
Tory Laughlin Taylor

Staff Present

John Rahaim
Layne Cubell
Brad Gassman
Sally MacGregor

19 Oct 2000 Project: **Westlake Plaza Visitor Center**
 Phase: Scope Briefing
 Previous Review: 6 January 2000 (Westlake Improvements Street Use Permit Conceptual), 3 February 2000 (Westlake Improvements Street Use Permit Schematic)
 Presenters: Al Bragalone, Markie Nelson Interior Design, Inc.
 Glen Peterson, TAG Architects
 Anais Winant, Seattle King County Convention and Visitors Bureau
 Attendees: Marilee Amendola, Seattle King County Convention and Visitors Bureau
 Katarina Garner, Westlake Center
 Donna James, Office of Economic Development
 Brenda Klein, Westlake Center, General Manager
 Vince Lyons, Department of Design Construction and Land Use (DCLU)
 Steve Pfeiffer, DCLU
 Chris Pugel, Westlake Center

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # | DC00194)

Action: The Commission thanks the design team for the excellent initial design concept and makes the following recommendations:

- The Design Commission is encouraged by the siting of the project along the building edge so as to be respectful of Westlake Plaza and the means by which the Visitor Center engages the existing stair;
- appreciates the balance between visibility and unobtrusiveness;
- has some concerns about the distance between the Visitor Center and the adjacent plaza stairs and circulation patterns;
- looks forward to further design development of the floating, sweeping roof planes, hoping that these elements will engage users with vertical elements of the stair;
- urges the design team to keep the signage simple;
- urges the proponents to work with Department of Design Construction and Land Use to resolve the space between the roof and the stairs, to meet the fire code requirements; putting the structure beneath the exit stairs of the building will require certain materials;
- urges the proponents to coordinate with the coffee kiosk design vocabulary to tie building elements on the Plaza together; and
- looks forward to future updates.

Seattle King County Convention and Visitor's Bureau has been investigating possible sites for a visible, and easily accessible visitor information center for the city (in addition to the current Visitor's Center, which is located within the Washington State Convention Center). This staffed center would provide information about the city of Seattle, as well as information about travel throughout the state. The chosen site at Westlake, under the landing of the main, front stairs of the plaza, provides an opportunity to enliven "underutilized" space; the center would be visible, but not intrusive. The Visitor Center, in the highly populated area of Westlake Plaza, would be staffed with a single person during the winter, and two people during the summer. The design team presented the conceptual design which has developed as an intent to remain visible, while continuing to allow a view through the stairs, which have perforated

metal risers. The existing conditions, of an industrial character, include a lower and upper landing, separated in height by six feet, and lighting. The plan of the Visitor Center is a very simple rectangle, with an L-shaped counter. The center will be enclosed by glass on three sides for visibility, with a door to provide access. The curved roof plane will float beneath the stairs, and will provide a backdrop for lighted, changing signage or projected images. The wall beyond the attendants' counter will be solid, with brochure shelves. The primary materials for the Visitor Center will include stainless steel and glass.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like to know the character and uses of the space around the Visitor Center. Would like to know if there will be space for people to queue or sit and read their brochures.
 - Proponents stated that they believe visitors will gather talking amongst themselves, rather than forming a long line. Further stated that the space surrounding the center is seven feet wide to the steps or nearby planters, which will remain. The proponents do not expect to have thirty people waiting at once, but there will be enough room to accommodate ten.
- Recognizes that the weather protection extends beyond the stairs toward the plaza and the nearby stairs. Hopes that seven feet will be sufficient, and hopes that people will not turn around and bump into stairs.
 - Proponents recognized and agreed with this concern, and did not want the design to interfere with the grand stairs.
- Would like to know if there will be enough room for people to walk around visitors gathered at the counter.
 - Proponents stated that they believe there will be enough room; typically visitors come in groups of three or four, obtain information, and leave.
- Would like to know if the Visitor Center will retain its sense of transparency when the attendant windows are closed.
 - Proponents stated that there will be three levels of access, depending on the weather conditions. Throughout the winter, there will be small portholes, while in the summer, the windows will be completely wide open.
- Appreciates and respects the siting of the Visitor Center within the plaza, and believes that the conceptual design is appropriate and successful. Believes that the location beneath the stairs offers opportunities for a variety of solutions, and looks forward to the development of the graceful roof forms. Urges the design team to be careful when considering signage for the Visitor Center. Feels that the signage should be discrete and engaging.
- A representative from the Department of Design Construction and Land Use (DCLU) would like to see a context and site map at future presentations. Appreciates the eastern orientation and is also concerned about the circulation. Agrees that the design direction is appropriate.
- A DCLU representative recognizes that the Visitor Center is located near a primary exit for the food court. States the design must be rated for One Hour Fire Protection, and the amount of combustible materials (boxes papers, and furniture) within the Visitor Center will be limited also.
 - Proponents stated that the paper items will be limited, and there will be about twenty main brochures or guides. Further stated that the design will follow the requirements and limitations.

- A DCLU representative would like to know if there will be fireproof glass at the stairs. Recommends that a sprinkler curtain is another option that could limit the combustibility.
- Appreciates the design direction of the team. Feels that the roof planes should be as light as possible.
- Believes that the design solution is successful, as it is not located within the mains vistas and circulation spaces.
- Would like to know how the design of the space between the roof and the stairs will be resolved. Wonders if the center will engage or disengage the stairs.
 - Proponents stated that the team has spent some time to resolve this matter. Further stated that the services might be located within this recess, and does not plan to extend the Visitor Center beyond the upper landing.
- Urges the design team to keep the light attraction as simple as possible.
 - Proponents stated that it will be simple. Further stated that the only requirement for signage is the notification that it is an information center.
- Appreciates the concept of siting the Visitor Center within found space. Hopes that the design will engage the those standing at the counter and the lower roof plane will not obstruct the visitors' view of the upper sweeping roof plane. Would like to engage the center with the stairs and larger context through sweeping vertical elements.
 - Proponents stated that the lower roof plane provides intimacy and scale for those standing at the counter.
- Urges the design team to coordinate the design elements with the Starbucks kiosk at the other end of Westlake Plaza.

19 Oct 2000 Project: **Seattle Design Commission Handbook Revisions**

Phase: Discussion

Presenters: Layne Cubell, CityDesign
 Brad Gassman, CityDesign
 John Rahaim, CityDesign

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 168 | DC00003)

Actions: The Commission appreciates the discussion and will form a sub-committee to work on the Handbook revisions.

The Seattle Design Commission Handbook was developed as a means by which project proponents could be informed of the requirements of a project presentation to the Seattle Design Commission. The Handbook is used to outline physical design presentation requirements as well as a listing of design expectations and goals, supported by excerpts from the Seattle Municipal Code. While the principles are directive, clear, and prescriptive, some are redundant and need to be simplified and strengthened to quell the continuing frustration with project proponents' presentations. Additionally, the Handbook explains the role of the Design Commission and outlines the steps of Capital Improvements Projects (CIP) review process. CityDesign hopes to refine the design of the Handbook to graphically explain and distinguish between certain steps. CityDesign has also been discussing ways by which the work of the Commission could be evaluated.

CityDesign also hopes to develop a current Design Commission portfolio to highlight successful projects and project principles as examples for other project proponents. As an example, the current Design Review Board portfolio contains example projects, represented by photos and analyses, and also contains quotes from Design Review Board members. The portfolio for the Design Commission would be continuously updated through a consistent format. Like the Design Review Board, CityDesign hopes to visit Design Commission projects after completion, to document with photographs. Also, CityDesign hopes that the Commission could flag the projects that have evolved successfully.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Hopes that the Handbook will urge proponents to discuss Design Principles before centering the project discussion on the images and sketches.
- Would like to know if project proponents actually read the Handbook.
 - Many CIP proponents do read it, and state that it has been very useful. Would also like to remind the Commissioners that the Handbook can always be found in meeting binders, for the Commissioners to use during reviews, and reinforce the principles found within.
- Believes that the instructional portion should be separate and clear, so project proponents can understand what is expected of them. There are some portions of the presentation that proponents consistently do not complete.
- Recognizes that there could be a checklist for minimum requirements, and feels that the philosophical ideas are more difficult to present.
- Agrees that there could be a separation between instructional "how-to's" and philosophical design principles. The philosophical goals of all projects would not be developed or explained in the same manner, but the proponents should explain how they developed and fulfilled their principles.

- Would like to know if there is a follow-up process by which the Commission verifies their recommendations.
 - It is difficult, because the Seattle Design Commission reviews projects prior to the project's Design Construction and Land Use (DCLU) permit application process. Recognizes that some of the design features, presented to the Commission, are often never built.
- Recognizes that many design changes happen between design review and the Master Use Permit (MUP) application.
- Hopes that the Handbook revision includes an explanation or definition of an action. Believes that the Handbook should explain to proponents how to follow an action.
 - The Seattle Design Commission is not regulatory, but is advisory. Would like to develop ways by which people are encouraged to follow the Commission's direction.
- Believes that the Handbook and/or Portfolio also presents an attempt to tell a story of the success of project review over a period of time.
 - Agrees that the Commission is also aware of the way in which the city is developing over time, and the built climate is different than it used to be and continues to change over time. Feels that the Commission handbook should recognize the changing role through the principles outlines in the Handbook. Recognizes that attention of the Commission focuses on urban design, rather than solely an examination of architectural details; urban design is the real focus of the Commission, because project proponents must explain what they are giving back to the community.
- Recognizes that proponents often ignore the significance of their project within a larger city context, and the Commission needs to urge proponents to see past their immediate concerns. Believes that the Handbook does not stress the importance of the future of the context, in addition to the current context. The Handbook needs to encourage vigilance to ensure continuity and direction. Recognizes that the character of Belltown has changed within the past five years. Feels that each project was judged against itself, rather than through an examination of how the neighborhood was evolving over time. Believes that the Commission should examine street vacations and what these vacations do to the city over time. The Commission is not intended to be an impediment to individual projects, but has larger, broader interests in mind.
- Recognizes that the client is in control of the program, rather than the architect.
- Feels that it is the project proponents' responsibility to examine the context. Feels that some design teams feel that the Commission encourages the client to act responsibly.
- Would like the Handbook to encourage design teams to ask themselves to identify the long range vision of the city, and how their project would fit into that vision. Feels that there should be an opportunity for education, beyond the role of the Handbook, to explain and enforce the urban design principles implicit in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Feels that the Commission represents the long term priorities of the public realm. Believes that the Commission should examine projects in which Commission comments have been ignored, and understand why.
 - Recognizes that in the Special Review Districts, there is no policy. Would like to extend

a message of explanation of the complicated process to better interface the project with the review process.

- Believes that CityDesign is an institution that should provide a single place for a project proponent to understand all design and arts components of a project, in relation to the many public entities involved in a project's process.
 - The actions and recommendations are presented to many City departments, as well as additional memos to the City Council. This information representing the opinion of the Commission has become important, especially through the review of important projects.
- Believes that some Commission meetings run well, but also believes that some project proponents do not understand the process and structure of a presentation. Believes that the Handbook should explicitly explain the process continuing from presentation, questions of clarification, discussion, and actions.
 - Recognizes that protocol is a continual question, and explains that the structure of a meeting is actually based on the preference of the chair.

19 Oct 2000 Project: **Olympic Sculpture Park**
Phase: Briefing
Presenters: Ken Bounds, Department of Parks and Recreation (DOPAR)
Ethan Melone, Strategic Planning Office
Chris Rogers, Seattle Art Museum
Attendees: Lesley Bain, Weinstein Copeland Architects
Maria Barrientos, Barrientos
Lyle Bicknell, CityDesign
Wendy Ceccherelli, DOPAR
Ryan Durkan, Hillis, Clark
Eric Gold, DOPAR
Barbara Goldstein, Seattle Arts Commission
Paul Hoff, DOPAR
Marsha Holbrook, Port of Seattle
Donald Loseff, Seattle Center
Catherine Maggio, Barrientos
Jan Oscherwitz, City Budget Office
Lisa Raflo, Department of Design Construction and Land Use (DCLU)
Laura Scharf, Seattle Transportation, SeaTran
Robert Scully, CityDesign
Jerry Suder, DCLU

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00195)

Actions: **The Commission is excited about the initial scope of this project, and believes that the Olympic Sculpture Park will be a significant contribution to the open space network of the city. The Commission hopes that the selection panel recommends a designer who is not only reputable for their qualifications, but will be able to recognize the many creative opportunities of the site, and the opportunity to develop a new concept for a sculpture park.**

Seattle Art Museum (SAM) has investigated potential outdoor monumental sculpture sites for the past two and a half years. The team has examined examples throughout other national and international cities, and has determined the sculpture park should be part of the cultural fabric of the city. SAM purchased undeveloped property in Seattle's central waterfront. The Olympic Sculpture Park will create a venue for large, immobile, but changing exhibitions. SAM hopes to create a park that will not only appeal to those coming to see exhibitions, but to people coming to the Olympic Sculpture Park as a park and space that is free and open to the public as well. While the site is located on the water, with views of the city, mountains, and water, the adjacent context is also changing rapidly. The public process has also been an important factor, as SAM, as the project manager for the display museum space, has engaged the public to reflect the variety of interests in relation to the many interested groups. The Department of Parks and Recreation (DOPAR), who will share the design costs, has also been involved, helping to develop the design principles, as this will be a significant downtown open space, and this park may be linked to South Lake Union and the Potlatch Trail.

The program for the Olympic Sculpture Park includes underground parking for 80 to 100 cars, offices and security for the park. There will also be a small building, roughly ten thousand square feet, to provide a gathering space and basic visitor services, as well as a potential educational program. Bridge

crossings and/ or tunnels will also be included, to provide access across the existing streets and railroads on the site. There is a change in grade of forty feet, and the site is steeply sloped in one primary area. The program emphasizes the importance of creating nearly-seamless connections between the Olympic Sculpture Park and existing waterfront open space, including Myrtle Edwards Park and the Alaskan Way promenade. The program recognizes the urban design challenges and opportunities associated with this site, including: transportation conflicts at Broad Street and Alaskan Way; the potential to extend the Waterfront Streetcar; the need for a comprehensive waterfront parking strategy; and the opportunity to improve the pedestrian environment and pedestrian connections along the central waterfront. The City's Strategic Planning Office (SPO) is coordinating city planning efforts to address the urban design issues, and has formed a Waterfront Stakeholders Group to provide a forum for involvement of community groups, business and property owners, and public agencies in these efforts. SAM and its lead designer will continue to work closely with the City and other stakeholders to integrate the Olympic Sculpture Park into this complex setting.

SAM has issued a widely-advertised Request for Qualifications. Responses are due December 15, 2000, and the selection process will include presentations by and interviews with a short list of qualified designers, with final selection in February 2001.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like to know if the Seattle Arts Commission (SAC) will be participating throughout project development.
 - Proponents stated that, while there is no formal involvement yet, they hope to include SAC once the consultant selection is complete.
- Recognizing the rapidly changing residential demographics of this area, is pleased that this site will be used as an open space, and feels that the demand upon open space will increase. Hopes that the Olympic Sculpture Park will become a different kind of park, and hopes that the fundamental idea of a park will shift. Urges the proponents to recognize that this should be taken into consideration during the consultant selection process.
- Would like to know if the site will be cleaned.
 - Proponents stated that most of the contaminated soil has been removed, and UNICAL is responsible for the cleanup. The team has been examining the site for the past ten months, and there is continuing groundwater monitoring.
- Would like to know if SAM intends to change the waterfront edge, or remove the seawall, to create a more natural environment.
 - Proponents stated that this might be a possibility, but the removal of the seawall would decrease the area of the park, in order to address the needs of that edge.
- Would like to know if there will be any changes to the billiard bar storefront.
 - Proponents stated that the team is negotiating with the owner and developer of that site.
- Would like to know if SAM has considered offering the adjacent water as an opportunity to encourage artists to work with water as a programmatic component of the project.
 - Proponents stated that there is concern about the disturbance of sediments.
- Is intrigued by the design opportunities provided by the obsolete trolley barn. Feels that the main facility should be removed, but the structure could remain, transparent, as a living museum of the

facility and a technological exploration of the contrast between old and new.

- Proponents agreed that the railroad adds interesting character to the site. Further stated that if the station remains, its integration would be important, and there would be a limitation for its transparency.
- Is fascinated and excited about this project and its start. Realizing that it will be one of the city's most significant parks, feels that the proponents should select a designer who will focus on the industrial history and water related industries of the site as well as the civic, artistic qualities of the project.
- Recognizing that the Seattle Design Commission is aware of the larger city context, believes that the contribution of the Design Commission could be significant to the consultant selection process. Is not sure that this recognition of the larger public interest is present on the selection committee.
- Understands that the lead designer will probably not be an artist, but would like to know if SAM will have an artist on board during the conceptual design process.
 - Proponents stated that, because of the complexity of the project and the many infrastructure components, SAM is hoping to use a lead designer. Further stated that SAM does not want to develop a team at this time, but will assemble a team once SAM has selected the design participants.
- Hopes that SAM recognizes that this project creates a chance to redefine the fundamental thinking of this type of place. Hopes that SAM and the project proponents could become a regional resource group, rather than simply a team for this project.
 - Proponents stated that the funding effort for early ideas was not very successful.
- Would like to know if the program provides a possibility for the inclusion of temporary work.
 - Proponents stated that SAM does not have the collection yet. Further stated that SAM is excited to start with a clean slate.
- A representative from CityDesign stated that this site is part of the larger Open Space Strategy, which was approved by City Council last week. There are four major open space projects planned, with twenty acres of new open space, to address the city's need for open space.
- A representative from the Seattle Arts Commission (SAC) would like to be a partner through this current stage of development and the development of the site.
- Believes that the construction process, before the site development is complete, should also provide an opportunity for temporary artist work. Believes that SAM should not wait for opening day to display artwork, and would like to mention the example of the Performing Arts Center in Mesa, Arizona.

19 Oct 2000 Project: **North Waterfront Access Project**
 Phase: Briefing
 Presenters: Lesley Bain, Weinstein Copeland Architects
 Ethan Melone, Strategic Planning Office
 Laura Scharf, Seattle Transportation, SeaTran
 Attendees: Lyle Bicknell, CityDesign
 Ryan Durkan, Hillis, Clark
 Eric Gold, DOPAR
 Barbara Goldstein, Seattle Arts Commission
 Paul Hoff, DOPAR
 Marsha Holbrook, Port of Seattle
 Donald Loseff, Seattle Center
 Catherine Maggio, Barrientos
 Chris Rogers, Seattle Art Museum
 Robert Scully, CityDesign
 Jerry Suder, DCLU

Time: .75 hour (SDC Ref. # 220 | DC00196)

Actions: The Commission appreciates the thorough presentation and looks forward to future presentations throughout the concept level of design development of this exciting project. The Commission appreciates the united effort of many teams to provide a comprehensive approach to the North Waterfront Access, linking the waterfront to Belltown, Queen Anne and other adjacent neighborhoods.

The Strategic Planning Office (SPO) and Seattle Transportation (SeaTran) have been working together to develop the North Waterfront Access Project. This project, recognizing the city's larger context, "will analyze existing and projected conflicts between rail traffic and pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle traffic, evaluate a range of alternative improvements for consideration by the public, and develop design concepts for the preferred alternatives." Currently, there are some connections and hillclimbs, linking the water with the city, but further north, it is difficult to access the waterfront from Belltown. This complex project will be led by the urban design team of Weinstein Copeland; the project managers feel that this design team has a strong background in community outreach, conceptual design, and environmental approaches, which are important design principles of this project.

The design team is excited by the challenges offered by this project, and plans to identify transportation improvements for the community and neighborhood context. This project is still developing through a discovery process, as the team has mapped new projects within this area of transformation. Because an increase in rail traffic will create conflicts between transportation priorities, the team will address these conflicts in a twenty year time frame, establishing acceptable safety levels, convening a stakeholders group, and conducting an urban design analysis to connect this site to the city. The team hopes to come to a point of agreement in the Spring, and identify a menu of preferred alternatives.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like to know what the final product of this project will be, and if the design team will identify the next steps to implement the goals of the North Waterfront Access project.
 - Proponents stated that the outcome for this project will be a set of design concepts. Further stated that the solution must be supported by instruction.
- Would like to know if METRO considers the waterfront trolley a viable income source, and wonders if the trolley could become a part of the free ride area.
 - Proponents stated that METRO is represented at the Waterfront Interdepartmental Team. Further stated that the trolley costs more than the bus to operate. Further stated that it would be difficult to justify an increase in service and frequency at this location, while service in other areas has been reduced.
- Appreciates the complexities of the project and feels that these conflicts are part of the urban richness and this historic waterfront.
- Recognizes that the primary conflict this project will address is the conflict between cars and trains.
 - Proponents acknowledged this point and stated that if the project was only focused on cars, the project would not be compelling. Further stated that this project will also address the limited transit access to the waterfront.
- Appreciates SeaTran's novel approach, and the incorporation of a design firm to address the circulation conflicts of this area.
- Commends SPO for the joint parking idea, and the connection to the Immunex site nearby. Believes that these traffic concerns are similar to those of the design intent to link to Potlatch Trail. Feels that this could become a policy direction, shaping the way that transportation within the city center is approached. Urges the team to consider alternatives of peripheral parking. Feels that Park and Ride lots are not only solutions for suburban areas.
- A member of SeaTran would like to know how the Design Commission hopes to be involved throughout the concept level design.
 - Commissioner Chair stated that the Commission would like to be briefed again midway through the concept stage, and at the end. The Commission would like to be able to advise other project proponents with related projects along the waterfront.
- Would like to know what SeaTran thinks about the North Waterfront Access Project.
 - A representative from SeaTran stated that the opinion would be based on what the product becomes. SeaTran does not have preconceived notions about the results, but stated while SeaTran does not have funds for the design and construction of this project, SeaTran hopes to implement process changes.

19 Oct 2000 Commission Business

ACTION ITEMS

A. TIMESHEETS

B. MINUTES FROM 21 SEPTEMBER 2000

ANNOUNCEMENTS

C. DELRIIDGE LIBRARY DESIGN REVIEW MEETING, OCTOBER 26TH.

D. DESIGN COMMISSION ORIENTATION LUNCH, OCTOBER 24.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

E. DC CANDIDATE UPDATE/ CUBELL

F. POTLATCH TRAIL WORKSHOP/ BICKNELL-THE POTLATCH TRAIL WOULD PROVIDE A PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION BETWEEN SEATTLE CENTER AND THE OLYMPIC SCULPTURE PARK. THERE IS A WORKSHOP PLANNED, TO DETERMINE PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, WHICH WILL BE FOLLOWED BY A DESIGN CHARETTE. THIS TRAIL WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN PORTIONS, WHILE SOME PORTIONS WOULD BE DEVELOPED THROUGH PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT.

G. VACATION BRIEFING/ CUBELL, BARNETT-BEVERLY BARNETT REITERATED SEATRAN'S VACATION POLICIES. THE STREET IS A GENERAL PUBLIC ASSET, AND THE EASEMENTS ARE INCLUDED FOR STREET AND STREET USE PURPOSES. WHEN EXAMINING VACATIONS, SEATRAN EXPLORES HOW THE VACATION WILL AFFECT THE TRADITIONAL USE OF THE STREET FOR VACATION PURPOSES, THE LAND USE EFFECTS OF THE ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS AND SCALES, AND THE PUBLIC BENEFIT PROPOSED BY THE PROPONENTS.

19 Oct 2000 Project: **5th and Yesler**
 Phase: Street and Alley Vacation, Follow-Up Briefing
 Previous Review: 15 June 2000 (Staff Briefing), 3 August 2000 (Street/ Alley Vacation Briefing)
 Presenters: Tom Berger, The Berger Partnership
 Rick Deno, Sclater Partners, Architects
 Martin Selig, Martin Selig Real Estate
 Attendees: Beverly Barnett, Seattle Transportation (SeaTran)
 Bill Eager, TDA, Inc.
 John Knickerbocker, Martin Selig Real Estate
 David Layton, King County
 Jim Light, Martin Selig Real Estate
 Guy Michaelsen, The Berger Partnership
 Marilyn Senour, SeaTran
 Ruri Yampolsky, Seattle Arts Commission
 Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00168)

Action: The Commission appreciates the clear and precise presentation and would like to make the following recommendations:

- reconsider the significant setback from Fifth Avenue and urges the design team to create a stronger urban edge at street level;
- is concerned that the design does not allow enough natural light to the northern area of the site, to ensure a successful public open space, and feels that more generous spaces along the proposed vacated portion of Terrace Street would make this open space more successful;
- is concerned that vacation of the segment of Terrace Street alone is insignificant and encourages the proponents to extend the vacated portion of Terrace Street east, to Sixth Avenue, to create a useful and inviting space for the public;
- urges the proponents to study successful public spaces in the city, such as Pike Street Hillclimb and Harbor Steps, to better understand how the proposed vacated spaces could be more inviting to the public;
- urges the proponents to seek insight and ideas from the landscape architects;
- suggests that the proponents work to ensure that further development on the adjacent King County properties both address and respond to the public character of the adjacent open spaces; and
- will need to see the vacation proposal again.

City staff summarized the scope and parameters of this proposed project at Fifth Avenue and Yesler Way and explained the contents of a memo, dated September 20, 2000, which addressed many of the Commission's concerns and questions about this project.

The proponents explained that King County, the owner of adjacent properties, is a joint applicant for this street and alley vacation request. The possible future adjacent development, across the alley, may be a parking garage with a park on the roof. King County would share the costs of design and construction of

the possible hillclimb (the proposed Terrace Street vacation) that would connect Fifth Avenue to Sixth Avenue. The project has been presented to the Design Review Board three times, and the team has taken the great comments into consideration.

A member of the design team explained that the site is constrained by parcels that do not allow easy access to the building. The design includes vacated streets, as the building moves to the north, to allow pedestrian access to the south side. The team has observed considerable activity on the site, as eight hundred people crossed the site during a six hour period. The design team would like to develop safer pedestrian access, as many transients and trash currently occupy the site. The team has worked with SeaTran, and has examined different types and designs of “T” intersections, as the intersection of Fifth Avenue and Terrace Street would become a “T” intersection, including an entrance to the building’s parking lot as well as access to King County parking, in the event that these street and alley vacations are granted. The vacated portion of Terrace would become a public open space with a terraced water feature, lighting, and benches, and the alley would become an interior public street behind the building. In addition to the hillclimbs and public open spaces, the proponents would also include, as public benefit, 5,500 square feet of a childcare facility, a public art piece at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Yesler Way, and would widen the existing sidewalk by two feet. The design team would work with the Seattle Arts Commission and King County Arts Commission to select the art piece.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like the proponents to explain the curb cuts and access to the parking.
 - Proponents stated that they have talked with SeaTran to develop standards for the “T” intersection, signage, and garage entry. The two-way garage entry will be twenty-eight feet wide.
- Would like to know why the building massing does not extend to the Yesler Way street edge. Feels that the concept design represents a suburban design response, placing the building on a plaza, rather than an urban response which would encourage the continuation and support of a streetwall.
 - Proponents stated that the building has been pulled away from the intersection of the two street grids to provide transition, and a space in which to locate a hillclimb. Further stated that this siting of the building preserves the view corridor of Fifth Avenue. Further stated that this design would also allow a view of the city, coming from Yesler Way.
- Feels that the proponents primarily addressed the vehicular access to the building, especially concerning the entry at Yesler Way. Would like to know if the proponents have considered the pedestrian experience of the hillclimbs, and is concerned about the southern hillclimbs, and the amount of pedestrian space that will be in shadow.
 - Proponents stated that they also were concerned about the shade and shadow of these public spaces. Further stated that there will be sun in the main hillclimb plaza in the afternoon, and on Terrace Street in the morning.
- Feels that, for the few pedestrians who use this space, this site is a “no man’s land.” Feels that this design may create a canyon effect. However, believes that the design creates an emphasis on the open Fifth Avenue, which is characterized as an arterial.
- Does not agree that the building should be pulled from the edge and believes that the art/ sculpture on a plinth, might be lost in the corner of Fifth Avenue and Yesler Way.

- Believes that the true public benefits are the hillclimbs, Terrace Street hillclimb, and the water feature. Would like to know if King County has promised to construct the portion of the hillclimb at the eastern edge of Terrace Street, to actually connect Fifth Avenue with Sixth Avenue, and would like to know when this connection might be made.
 - Proponents stated that King County has a joint agreement to share the parking access. Proponents stated that there is no formal agreement, and this participation is not definite. Proponents stated that they might have to complete the hillclimb, if this is a condition of the vacation.
- Feels that the parking access, below the park above, is reasonable, but feels that the hillclimb concept is compromised if it is only partially provided.
- Would like to know if the King County property, adjacent to these hillclimbs and public open spaces, would be subject to design review. Feels that, to ensure the success of this space, the proponents should make an effort to be certain that the adjacent buildings would be of the same high quality.
 - Proponents stated that only their buildings would be subject to design review, not the future King County construction.
- Takes a very stingy view of what public benefit is when looking at projects like this; it is important to uphold the true public benefit. Feels that the proponents are offering landscape and amenities that support the building and the activities taking place inside the building, rather than a public space. Feels that the proponents are improving a pathway that already exists. Does not believe that the public benefit is significant or generous enough to justify what the proponents gain by the use of the property.
 - Proponents stated that this idea of public benefit is that which is driving the idea of the water feature. Further stated that the public space along Terrace Street is a stand alone space. Recognized that these spaces do serve the tenants of the building, much of the population that will use this outdoor space will be those from the building. Further stated that as these people populate this space, other members of the public will feel comfortable using this space as well. Further stated that the proponents would like to return, after responding to these intelligent, constructive criticisms.
- Is concerned that the entrance to the public spaces in question have garage entrances and prominent private driveways through the central access to the space. Feels that the width of the entries to the garages should be as narrow as possible.
- Is concerned that as the building moves north, past the property line, into the vacated portion of Terrace Street, the building would be restricting the view corridor.
- Is concerned that if these streets are vacated, King County would be able to, in the future, develop their adjacent property as a superblock.

19 Oct 2000 Project: **Schnitzer Northwest Development**
Phase: Alley Vacation Briefing
Previous Review: 7 September 2000 (Vacation Briefing)
Presenters: Greg Brower, The Berger Partnership
Arthur Furukawa, NBBJ
Suzi Morris, Schnitzer Northwest Development
John Savo, NBBJ
Attendees: Beverly Barnett, Seattle Transportation (SeaTran)
John Eskelin, Department of Neighborhoods (DON)
Jeff Kiser, Schnitzer Northwest Development
Terry McCann, Huckell Weinman Associates, Inc.
Jack McCullough, Phillips McCullough
Lori Noto, NBBJ
Marilyn Senour, SeaTran
Kevin Teague, Foster Pepper Shefelman
David Van Skike, Department of Design Construction and Land Use (DCLU)

Time: 1.25 hour (SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00164)

Action: The Commission appreciates the thorough, detailed, and well-orchestrated presentation and makes the following comments and recommendations as the team develops the design:

- The Design Commission supports the proponents' decision to assign different buildings of the larger development to different firms, and believes that this will help perpetuate the varied character of the neighborhood;
- supports the proponents' goal to provide open space on site that meets the needs of the neighborhood;
- suggests that the design team's analysis of the building character of the neighborhood presents an inconsistency of building forms, and this character should be further explored in the buildings proposed for the site;
- feels that, while the larger site area analysis presents a contextual east-west building orientation, the design team should orient the building to Terry Avenue and explore an alternative without a vacation;
- appreciates the work by the design team, but would like the proponents to further investigate design alternatives that do not require an alley vacation; and
- would like to see the alley vacation proposal again, if the proponents do proceed with the vacation application.

The proponents presented the current design proposal and proposed alley vacation for the Schnitzer Northwest development, which has changed to respond to previous Design Commission concerns. The proponents conducted an analysis of the context, and have conducted a meeting within the neighborhood to determine the types of open space and public amenities that are needed. Terry Avenue, an adjacent street, has been identified as a street of interest, and the design team would like the development, along this edge to become a significant part of this pedestrian route. There are considerable grade changes, of up to twenty-three feet, between diagonal corners of the site.

The proponents conducted a study of the existing alleys and character of the neighborhood. While over 60% of the alleys are blocked (but not vacated), many buildings are oriented in the east-west direction. Some of the large buildings in the area are three-quarter or full block developments. The character of the existing context includes many lively and inconsistent styles and building types. They are commonly utilitarian or industrial buildings with flat roofs that maintain corners and extend to lot lines. Currently, the neighborhood character is going through a transition.

The proponents presented alternatives to the Design Commission, showing schemes and designs that retain the alley. The first scheme, with no alley vacation, included a building envelope that extended to the limits of the zoning code; the proponents explained that this design presents grade discrepancies to address, and this massive structure would require two separate parking garages. The second scheme moved the buildings to the northern portion of the site, and would contain an open space and loading dock to the south. The third scheme would offset the office buildings, with one building moved to the north, and one building to the south; the open space would be at the southeast corner of the site, and the scheme does not maintain the corners of the site. The fourth scheme was similar to the previous scheme, as the buildings would be shifted in opposite directions, and the open space would be located at the southwest corner of the site; through this scheme, the open space would be adjacent to Terry Avenue. The final scheme presents the proponents' preferred scheme, and includes the proposed alley vacation. The open space would be contained at the center of the block, and would offer a simple solution to the difference in grade, as well as improved solar exposure. The design team feels that the character and scale of the proposed open space would be consistent with the neighborhood's desires. This design would also minimize the number of curb cuts, as well as improve the quality and leasability of the development. While the proponents examined public open spaces of similar size in Seattle, the design team would like to develop the character for open space within this neighborhood. The team hopes to not only include rows of trees, but pockets of green space, as well as a continuous flow of paving. The proponents hope to include retail that would spill out into the courtyard.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Suggests that the design solution would be acceptable and appropriate for a suburban context, rather than an urban neighborhood. Feels that the alternatives presented, maintaining the alley, did not truly and creatively recognize the constraints as design opportunities.
- Believes that the proponents presented alternatives containing the worst case scenarios, and cannot compare schemes when equal efforts have not been applied to all schemes, including those that are not preferred.
 - Proponents stated that they did not intend to appear as though they were presenting unequal alternatives through their presentation, rather that they intended to present alternative schemes and present detail on the proposed open space scenario in response to comments from the initial meeting. Further stated that the loading dock was shown above grade in the alternative schemes because the alley could serve this use if it were retained.
- Is not convinced that the proposal and design justifies an alley vacation. Would like to know if the proponents would consider a full block building edge along Terry Avenue at the site, as well as the 360-foot edge across the street, at Tech Building 3.
 - Proponents stated that Terry Avenue could become a canyon if these two buildings were built along the full length of the block. Further stated that while the neighborhood is a mixture of scales, and the mixture of orientations would not be inconsistent with the

neighborhood.

- Recognizes that this early in schematic design and the neighborhood is multifaceted, but would like to know why the two buildings presented, in the alley retaining schemes, are alike.
 - Proponents stated that the building facades, materials and treatments could be changed.
- Many of the open spaces that the proponents presented as examples are part of a larger scheme and overriding grid, but this proposed open space is an anomaly. Does not believe there will be the immediate connections that are found in these examples.
 - Proponents recognized that the examples were different in character in that respect, but stated that the team examined these spaces to get a sense of scale.
- Is concerned about broader urban design issues, neighborhood patterns, and incremental impact of this vacation. Would like to know if the buildings could be modified in a different way; feels that the design is institutional. Recognizing the character of the neighborhood, feels that there is an opportunity to modulate the building, respectful of the contextual patterns. Would like to know if the team could develop a design that integrates the open space differently, relating it to Terry Avenue, and retains the alley as a functioning alley within the site.
 - Proponents recognized this constructive point. Stated that this is a problem of this stage in the design process. Further stated that the team does not want to move too far ahead with design, without a basic parti, accepted by the Commission. Agreed that the buildings should be modulated. Further stated that, through community meetings, the neighborhood feels that there is a lack of significant open space in the area. Stated that the community has reacted positively.
- Agrees that the presented alternatives did seem biased. Feels that the team was not as creative with the alternatives as they were with the preferred solution. Believes that the team could identify a successful scheme that would retain the existing grid, perhaps embellishing the alley as a public space. Feels that, while many of the buildings have an east-west orientation, these buildings are oriented to Terry Avenue, and feels that this façade orientation is more important than building mass orientation.
 - Proponents stated that the first five months of design included schemes that retained the alley. Further stated that the team tried to render each scheme equally. Further stated that it was difficult to incorporate the relevant issues (including fireproofing and leasable space), and the design team did include options that explored the use of the alley, even through the widening of the alley. Further requested clarifications from the Commission on their view of what constitutes public benefit relative to an alley or open space.
- Does not believe that the Commission is suggesting that the proponents develop the alley as a public open space. Commends the team for the intent to incorporate open space, but urges the proponents to recognize that the site is part of a larger grid, and this space would need to become part of a larger open space system.
- Recognizes that vacations are difficult. Feels that the historic rhythm and neighborhood pattern are important. Feels that the texture and scale of the neighborhood should be retained, regardless of the remaining alleys and vacated alleys.
- Feels that the proposed open space may not be contextual because it is too large. Is not convinced that the proponents have presented a compelling argument that this is a public benefit. Is primarily

concerned that this benefit would be a true public benefit for everyone in the city, while continuing to respect the scales, rhythms and patterns of the city.